

EITHER DECIDEDLY A GENIUS OR DECIDEDLY NOT

on the statewide essay exam  
there is a box in which to check  
that english is or isn't your first language.

if english isn't your first language,  
then there is another box  
for writing in what is your first language.

one student wrote in  
latin.

FIRST DATE

"what's that smell?" she asks.

"i don't smell anything," i say,  
"but drinking tends to clog my nostrils."

"it smells like shit," she says.

"probably pollution," i say;  
"we're probably driving past a toxic dump."

the date ends badly.

two days later i nose out  
beneath some newspapers on the back seat  
a plastic bag of dirty diapers.

SOL Y SOMBRA

i'm picking up my daughter  
at my former wife's  
and they're trying to decide  
what clothes she should bring along  
for the weekend's weather.  
then the mother glances at my all-purpose shirt  
and laughs: "what's the secret  
of a year-round wardrobe?"

it's simple: strive to remain  
in the sun in the winter, and,  
in the summer, seek the shade.